Property Description

The Seaboard Air Line Railway depot in McBee, South Carolina, is a one-story red brick building that stands on West Pine Avenue (S.C. 151) approximately 500 feet northwest of its intersection with U.S. Highway 1. The depot is located within the town's central commercial district and was built on a modified rectangular plan. Its wooden window frames and trimwork are painted white; each of its several doors is a deep forest green. Three brick chimney stacks protrude from the peak of the sharply-pitched hipped roof, which is covered with pale green asphalt shingles. A single dormer with two casement windows projects from the roof on the west facade. The depot retains its historical integrity and has undergone no significant alterations since its construction in the spring of 1914.

The South Carolina Railroad Commission ordered construction of the depot in the fall of 1913 with the intention that it would serve as the union passenger station for the Seaboard Air Line Railway and the South Carolina Western Railway, which at the time were the two largest and most significant of the three railroads providing service to McBee. But soon after work on the building began in March 1914, a merger made the South Carolina Western part of the Seaboard system. Thus, by the time the depot became operational, it was used exclusively by Seaboard trains. It has therefore been known throughout its history as the "Seaboard depot."

The aesthetic features of the depot do not fall within the defining characteristics of any major architectural style. Rather, it is typical of small-town railroad stations of the period, which were uniformly designed to serve their intended purposes as efficiently as possible.[1] Such structures exemplified the "form follows function" maxim; in many cases, features that seemed purely decorative in fact played an essential practical role in day-to-day railroad operations. The dramatically flared eaves of the McBee depot's hipped roof are an

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[1]On the architecture of turn-of-the-century small-town depots, see especially John R. Stilgoe, *Metropolitan Corridor: Railroads and the American Scene* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 195-203.